

Educational
Pamphlet

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漢代貴族生活

Legends of Luxury and Elegance

Lifestyles of the Han Nobility

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Welcome
to

Legends of Luxury and Elegance: Lifestyles of the Han Nobility
A large number of relics from the former Changsha kingdom of the Western Han dynasty have been unearthed, but it is the Han tombs at Mawangdui that have yielded the most valuable artefacts from this period. The tombs and their treasures reveal the extravagant and luxurious lifestyles that the Han nobility led at that time. Before you tour the exhibition, let's first introduce to you the Changsha kingdom, where the Han tombs at Mawangdui were located.

The Changsha kingdom

The Changsha kingdom in the Western Han dynasty was situated in present-day Hunan province. When Emperor Gao of Han (r. 206-195 BC) unified China after years of strife, he introduced a system of vassal states with which he rewarded those who had helped him establish the Han empire. Wu Rui was one of the beneficiaries, and he was named the first King of Changsha during the 5th year of Emperor Gao's reign (202 BC). The capital of his kingdom was Linxiang, or present-day Changsha.

Now that you know a little bit about the Changsha kingdom in the Western Han dynasty; try and fill in the modern names of the locations marked in red on the map and colour the province in which Mawangdui is located.



Think
about it!

3 According to the map, the Changsha kingdom covered which four present-day Chinese provinces, apart from most of Hunan province?

Answer: _____ province, _____ province,
_____ province and a small part of _____ province.

Do you know where Hong Kong is on the map?
How far is Hong Kong from the Changsha kingdom of the Western Han dynasty?

Landmark archaeological discovery

The Han tombs at Mawangdui in Hunan province have yielded a large number of valuable artefacts, which have allowed us an insight into the development of early Han civilisation. How much do you know about the Han tombs at Mawangdui? Choose the right answers for this report on the Han tombs.

- To which dynasty in Chinese history did the Han tombs at Mawangdui belong?
A. Qin dynasty B. Western Han dynasty C. Eastern Han dynasty
- The Han tombs at Mawangdui are the burial ground of whose family?
A. Li Cang B. Han Xin C. Ying Bu
- What was the official position in the Changsha kingdom of the person referred to in question 5?
A. Prime Minister B. County Governor C. Lieutenant
- In the 2nd year of the reign of Emperor Hui (193 BC), what title was conferred upon this person for his contribution to the empire?
A. Marquis of Ping Yang B. Marquis of Liu C. Marquis of Dai
- Who occupied Tomb 1 at Mawangdui?
A. Emperor Gao of Han B. Marquise of Dai, Xin Zhui
C. King Wen of Changsha kingdom, Wu Rui

Do you know?

The rank of Marquis of Dai was conferred upon Li Cang during the reign of Emperor Hui of Han (194-188 BC). As Marquis, he was given the county of Dai, located between present-day Guangshan county and Luoshan county in Henan province. Although his county was just a small piece of land, Li Cang, as prime minister, held the most powerful executive office in the Changsha kingdom and was the head of both the civil and military services with the authority to command the military. The household of the Marquis of Dai led a lifestyle of luxury and elegance that reflected its prominent status in the Changsha kingdom.

Fashion and design

A large collection of exquisite textile products was discovered in the Han tombs at Mawangdui. The people of Han made delicate thread with silk and wove different kinds of fabric with it, such as *sha*, *luo*, *jin* and *juan* silk.

These fabrics were then used to make clothes. Of these silk fabrics, *jin* silk was the most expensive; clothes made from embroidered *jin* silk were especially sought after.

The embroidery on these fabrics carries a special meaning.

Can you match the patterns with their names?



9



10



11

A

Chengyun embroidery, with cloud, plant and bird patterns. The image of birds gliding among clouds refers to auspicious phoenixes riding clouds.

B

Embroidery with dogwood pattern, the pattern is made up of floating clouds and *zhuyu* (dogwood) to create a continuous design that embodies longevity and the driving away of misfortune.

C

Xinqi embroidery, with patterns incorporating floating clouds, interwoven flowers and stems and long-tailed birds that resemble the swallow. Swallows are migratory birds that move from season to season, thus the name *xinqi*.

You can now go into the exhibition gallery and make a print of your favourite pattern!

Dining and banquets

The people of the Western Han enjoyed a rich and sumptuous diet and developed a diversity of exquisite dining ware to accompany it. The food, crockery and cutlery found in the Han tombs at Mawangdui reveal a very sophisticated dining culture. Different food vessels served different functions, and their meticulous arrangement shows that ancient Chinese people had high expectations when it came to eating and drinking. The impressive array of burial objects features a collection of the best food of the time, including fruit, pastries and meat. Do you know what food was found in the containers below? What food that we eat today would you use these containers for?



13 Painted lacquer *lian* box

Ancient Chinese: _____

Me: _____

14 Small lacquer dish with inscription "*junxingsbi*" (meaning: plying the honourable diner with more food)

Ancient Chinese: _____

Me: _____



15 Lacquer *zhi* cup with cloud pattern and inscription "*junxingjiu*" (meaning: plying the honourable drinker with more wine)

Ancient Chinese: _____

Me: _____

16 Lacquer *ding* tripod with cloud pattern

Ancient Chinese: _____

Me: _____



Think about it!

12 How would you use these patterns on daily items today to highlight their meaning?

Answer: _____

Patterns of lacquerware

A great variety of lacquerware was discovered in the tombs, all displaying high-quality craftsmanship and designs. Can you identify the patterns and what they symbolised?



17 Painted lacquer dish

_____ pattern,

_____ symbolising

_____ pattern,

_____ symbolising

18 Painted lacquer *zhong* vessel



19 Flanged lacquer cup with inscription "*junxingjiu*"

_____ pattern,

_____ symbolising

Think about it!

Why is red, or vermillion, the primary colour in the designs on Mawangdui lacquerware?

As early as the Neolithic age, red was connected with spiritual beliefs. The Chu state preserved much of this perception, especially the idea that red symbolises reverence for one's ancestors. The Han tombs at Mawangdui are located in the territory of the former Chu state, and it is therefore not surprising that the colour of the paint on the lacquerware unearthed there reflects the Chu's respect for red.



Scholarly collection of knowledge

The Han tombs at Mawangdui yielded a large collection of ancient bamboo scrolls and silk books, almost as if they were an underground library. The books cover a variety of interests, including philosophy, history, astronomy, the calendar, geography, medicine and geomancy. Together, they

bear witness to the academic achievements and philosophical thought of Chinese civilisation during the early Han dynasty. Can you identify the silk books from the exhibits? What's more, can you appreciate the keen pursuit of humanist and academic traditions by the early Han nobility?



- 20 Philosophy
Exhibit: _____
- 21 History
Exhibit: _____
- 22 Horse judging
Exhibit: _____
- 23 Astronomy
Exhibit: _____
- 24 Medicine
Exhibit: _____
- 25 Health and well-being
Exhibit: _____



Do you know?

Jian, Ce

Before paper was invented, the people of the Han dynasty wrote on bamboo strips or wooden strips with ink. The bamboo strips were called *jian* and the wooden tablets were called *mudu*. Ancient Chinese people would string the bamboo strips together, and these bamboo strips were then known as *ce*. For longer works, the *ce* was divided into two or three volumes. At the same time, to make them easy to store, the stringed bamboo strips were rolled up into scrolls. Imagine you have to turn your textbooks into bamboo scrolls. Do you think you could carry all of them to school in a backpack? You can see that learning has become quite a different experience for us!

Ancient secrets to health

The people of the Han dynasty were especially concerned with their well-being and practised principles of healthy living. Unearthed from Tomb 3 at Mawangdui was *Daoyin Tu* ("Physical Exercise Chart"), which contains illustrations of 44 breathing and physical exercises. Some of the illustrations depict postures derived in imitation of animals that were said to promote good health.

Can you identify the animal postures in the illustrations on *Daoyin Tu*? What animals are being imitated? Write your answers in the space provided.

26



27

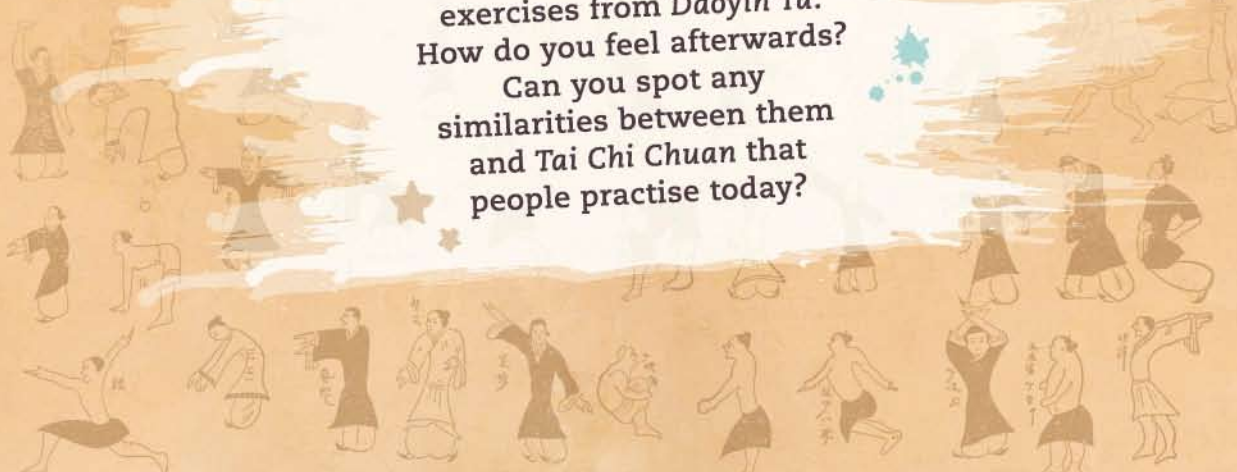


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Do it yourself!

Try doing some of the exercises from *Daoyin Tu*. How do you feel afterwards? Can you spot any similarities between them and Tai Chi Chuan that people practise today?



Myths of the immortals

The desire for eternal life inspired the Han people's fascination with immortal beings, and they dreamed of ascending to heaven in the afterlife. The T-shaped painting on silk found in Tomb 1 of Mawangdui presents a view of the universe that is divided into three sections – heaven, the human world and the underworld. The images depict immortals and mythical stories and symbolise ancient Chinese people's quest for longevity and immortality. Take a close look at this T-shaped painting on silk and see if you can identify the following drawings:



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I Nuwa / fire dragon *zhulongshen*, crane, golden crow, small suns, Chang-e, toad, jade rabbit, crescent moon and dragon.

II Tomb occupant, Marquise of Dai

III Giant, whales and turtles

Please fill in the three sections of heaven, the human world and the underworld in different colours.

Think about it!

30

Many of the immortals and myths depicted on the T-shaped painting on silk are still familiar to the Chinese people today. Can you give some examples?

Answer: _____

31

At the same time, some of the images on the silk painting suggest longevity and good fortune and represent the wish of ancient Chinese people for blessings and a long life. We can still see these images today during festivals, celebrations and even on common household items. Can you recognise any from your daily life? Give some examples.

Answer: _____

Follow-up Questions

1. Now that you have looked around the exhibition. Do you think any of our values, customs and lifestyles today have roots dating back to the Han dynasty?

2. In your view, which exhibit best illustrates the luxurious lifestyle led by the Han nobility? Why?

Answer: 1.Xi'an 2.Changsha 3.Guangxi, Guangdong, Jiangxi and Hubei 4.B 5.A 6.A 7.C 8.B 9.B 10.C 11.A 12.Own answers 13.millet cakes 14.meat, noodles 15.wine 16.soup and lotus roots slices 17.Cat, longevity 18.Phoenix, auspiciousness 19.Clouds, the land of the immortals 20.Zhouyi: *Liushisi Gua* ("64 Diagrams, Book of Changes"), *Huangdi Sijing* ("Four Classics of the Yellow Emperor") 21.*Chunqiu Shiyu* ("Anecdotes and Speeches from the Spring and Autumn Period") 22.*Xiangma jing* ("Classic of Horse Judging") 23.*Tianwen Qixiang Zazhan* ("Divination by Astrological and Meteorological Phenomena") 24.*Prescriptions for 52 Diseases, He Yinyang* ("Harmony of Yin and Yang") 25.*Yangsheng Fang* ("Prescriptions on Maintaining Health") 26.bear 27.ape / monkey 28.crane / birds 29.see drawing on the left 30.Chang-e ascends to the moon, *Nuwa* repairs the walls of heaven, *Houyi* as the archer of the sun. 31.Own answers, e.g. turtle implying longevity; dragon, toad and crane implying good fortune.



Heaven

I : ■

II : ■

III : ■

The human world

Underworld

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